UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.12/2001/SR.41
28 August 2001

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Twenty-sixth (extraordinary) session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 20 August, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. CEAUSU
(Vice-Chairperson)

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS:

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Fourth periodic report of Ukraine (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.01-44274 (E) 220801 280801

In the absence of Ms. Bonoan-Dandan, Mr. Ceausu, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS:

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 6) (continued)

Fourth periodic report of Ukraine (continued) (E/C.12/4/Add.2, E/C.12/CA/UKR/1 and E/C.12/Q/UKR/2; HR/CESCR/NONE/2001/6)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Boliubash, Ms. Markina, Mr. Pavlishin, Mr. Phrolov, Mr. Yurpolskyi and Mr. Zuhravyi (Ukraine) resumed their places at the Committee table.

Articles 6-9 of the Covenant (continued)

2. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine), referring to measures for the protection of the disabled, said that a national programme for training and hiring disabled persons had been introduced by presidential decree for the period 2001-2005. Full funding had been made available for its implementation, testifying to the importance which his Government attached to the protection of the disabled. A social assistance plan had also been adopted. In July 2001, legislation had been adopted establishing a 4 per cent quota for disabled persons in the workplace. A national centre for the vocational training and employment of the disabled was to be established with the cooperation of the International Labour Organization. A State educational and training programme was also in preparation.

3. Some 8,000 disabled persons were in employment. In 2000, around 10,000 disabled persons had been provided with wheelchairs, and 30,000 had received care in health centres. The body responsible for providing assistance to the disabled had some 700 regional centres throughout the country.

4. Mr. BOLIUBASH (Ukraine) said that there was a network of schools for disabled children, including some 400 special boarding schools funded by the State for mentally retarded children. Parents could visit their children and the children could visit their parents freely. Vocational schools, closely monitored by the Ministry of Education and Science, offered special classes in which disabled adolescents learned a trade. But in view of the many problems associated with vocational training the Ministry had recently proposed a vocational training programme to help disabled persons, particularly those in wheelchairs, gain access to education, especially at schools which had a physical layout that was not suitable for such pupils. Notwithstanding the current economic crisis, Ukraine was finding the funds to enable those children to be properly taught, clothed and fed.

5. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine), referring to a question on foreign workers, said that according to official statistics, there were 33,000 foreigners working in the country, above all in

the building and service sectors. Their rights were protected under the law. Labour legislation applied equally to foreign workers and Ukrainian citizens. In addition many Ukrainian nationals were working abroad, some of them illegally.

6. Unemployment stood at 12.7 per cent for women and 12.3 per cent for men. The difference was thus minimal. Jobs had been lost in the construction and manufacturing sectors. Women made up 58.3 per cent of the workforce in the private sector and 59.9 per cent in the public sector.

7. Replying to a question by Mr. Kouznetsov, he said that specific measures had been taken to protect women from hazardous and insalubrious work. Those measures had not yet been implemented sufficiently, but efforts were continuing. Protection of the health of women in the workplace was governed by a special chapter of the Labour Code specifying those jobs where women could not be employed. That included night-time work and the employment of pregnant women and women with children up to the age of three. The Ministry of Health had set limits for loads which women could carry and for work that would endanger their health. Private-sector compliance with those labour standards was closely monitored.

8. Mr. YURPOLSKYI (Ukraine), replying to a question concerning immigration, said that Ukraine's legislation provided for the granting of asylum. Since 1993 refugee status had been granted to 2,950 persons, including 872 children under the age of 16. Refugees had come from 47 different countries, including those of Africa and the Middle East. As of 1 July 2001, temporary humanitarian assistance had been provided to 2,697 persons who had fled Abkhazia and Georgia. In June 2001 the first centre for temporary refugees had been opened in the region of Odessa, and it was planned to open three further centres in the course of the next year.

9. In June 2001, a new legislation on refugees had been enacted in line with standards of international law. His Government was working to achieve Ukraine's accession to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and improve the legal basis for regulating questions of nationality. On 15 June 2001, the President of Ukraine had signed a decree authorizing additional regulations on freedom of movement and free choice of residence, putting an end to the institution of registration at place of residence. In recent months new legislation on immigration, citizenship and refugees had been adopted and a programme to combat illegal immigration introduced. Parliament was currently considering a bill on procedures for granting asylum to foreign citizens and stateless persons. The above measures created the necessary pre-conditions for Ukraine to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

10. A question had been asked about violations of the human rights of Chechens. Since the beginning of the conflict in Chechnya, a small number of Chechens had come to Ukraine. They had been housed, and there had been no violations of their rights. More recently, however, there had been isolated cases of Chechens having been refused refugee status pending examination of the active role that they had allegedly played in the armed conflict.

11. The figures for refugees from Asia and Africa - as of 1 July 2001, a total of some 2,700 persons - were really quite low, and thus there could be no question of major violations of the human rights of persons from those regions. Much greater account was being

taken of the need to treat refugees as leniently as possible. Ukraine was taking energetic, practical steps to ensure that immigrants were duly protected in keeping with international legal standards.

12. Mr. PHROLOV (Ukraine) referred to the question of privatization. A large-scale national privatization programme was under way, and some 50 per cent of industry and more than 90 per cent of agriculture had already been privatized. A major role was being played by local self-management bodies. In 1997 Ukraine had signed the European Charter of Local Self-Government and was fully involved in implementing it. Privatization projects at regional level had drawn largely on the experience of France, giving special financial support to depressed areas.

Articles 10-12 of the Covenant

13. Mr. AHMED said that the Committee on the Rights of the Child had expressed alarm at the high rate of abandonment of children, especially newborn babies, and the lack of a comprehensive strategy to assist vulnerable families, a situation which had led to illegal international trafficking in children for adoption purposes. It had also voiced concern about the failure of legislation in Ukraine to prohibit the sale of children or guarantee the right of the child to preserve his or her identity.

14. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ukraine Human Development Report 1999, large families were most at risk of becoming impoverished, and there was a correlation between the number of children and the level of poverty. What were the authorities doing to rectify that state of affairs?

15. Mr. MALINVERNI asked how Ukraine's system of family allowances worked. The State party had not replied to question 27 in the list of issues (E/C.12/Q/UKR/2) on what State programmes existed or were envisaged to help families with more than three children and women bringing up children born out of wedlock. Could the Ukrainian delegation provide further details on the legislation which had entered into force on 1 April 2001 on social assistance for underprivileged families? How did the system of family allowances operate? Was it offsetting the risk of poverty for families with large numbers of children?

16. Mr. ATANGANA asked how the State party was dealing with abortions, which, according to the Committee's information, were widespread.

17. The State party had acknowledged many cases of physical assault and even premeditated murder committed by juveniles between the age of 14 to 17. What were the reasons for such crimes?

18. Ukraine had failed to answer question 31 in the list of issues, which had sought information about programmes to prepare young fathers for family life.

19. Concerning family violence, the written replies spoke of legal services for victims. What did such services entail? Were acts of family violence brought before the courts?

20. Ms. BARAHONA-RIERA said that given the high numbers of abandoned children and youngsters, some families clearly found it difficult to support children in the current economic climate. Why was there no legal obligation on divorced or separated parents to pay alimony and what was the State party doing to provide adequate allowances for such children? The report referred to a decrease in the number of children and young people in care, which did not tally with information from other sources indicating an increase in the number of abandoned children, juvenile delinquency and child prostitution. Were there fewer places available in institutions or was the Government allocating fewer resources? Was the State pension for the elderly adequate? Given the acute shortage of housing in the Ukraine, were pensioners guaranteed subsidized housing?

21. Mr. PILLAY said that according to information provided in the report by UNDP, 30 per cent of the population of the Ukraine was poor and 15 per cent lived in abject poverty. Such poverty was in part attributable to the process of economic transition, which had served to enrich only a tiny minority. Poverty affected the more vulnerable segments of the population, especially the elderly, women and children, in a variety of ways, including prostitution, abandonment and trafficking in children. Paragraph 269 of the report referred to a draft Poverty Alleviation Programme. Had it been implemented and did it focus particularly on economic, social and cultural rights? He also sought more information on cooperation with the World Bank in support of the development of poor communities.

22. Mr. SADI expressed dismay at the continuing problem of trafficking in women and young children for prostitution. The measures adopted by the State thus far were clearly not sufficient, as the problem had worsened. Despite the amendments introduced to criminal legislation, the sentences imposed for such crimes were still very light and would not serve as a deterrent. Greater efforts should be made to heighten awareness of the problem, for instance through the media. He wondered whether the problem was solely poverty-related or also attributable to the breakdown of family values. Surely the various religious leaders in the country could provide some assistance in that regard? Was there any cooperation with the Governments of the destination countries, with a view to putting an end to trafficking? How could the goals of economic development and progress be reconciled with the fact that large numbers of young people went abroad to work as prostitutes? It was an appalling situation and must be accorded the highest priority by the Government.

23. Mr. GRISSA said that according to the population breakdown given in the report women outnumbered men by almost 10 per cent. What was the reason for that? Was it a consequence of the last war? The average life expectancy of women was also considerably higher than that of men; why so?

24. With regard to health, the State party had devoted nearly 20 paragraphs in the report to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and only a very few paragraphs to other health problems such as HIV/AIDS, including among young people. How effective was AIDS testing in the country and was it usually carried out before entering into marriage? He would welcome information on the effects of alcoholism - a serious problem in most Eastern European countries - of which there was no mention in the report.

25. Mr. MARTYNOV said that there were some discrepancies between the information regarding the homeless contained in paragraph 252 of the report and in the written replies. He sought clarification of whether there had been an increase or decrease in numbers, as well as of the effects of the comprehensive measures to prevent homelessness and delinquency among children and teenagers under Presidential Decree No. 200 of 18 March 1998, referred to in paragraph 254 of the report.

26. How did the delegation view the overall situation of the health-care system? What were the effects of the transition towards private medicine? How was quality of service monitored? What percentage of the State budget had been allocated to public health in recent years?

27. Mr. HUNT asked the delegation to provide data on the numbers of women who were victims of international trafficking. Was there a national plan of action for human rights in Ukraine? Did the Office of the Ombudsman have regional branches?

28. Mr. CEAUSU said that according to paragraphs 245 to 248 of the report a very large number of families had benefited in recent years from State subsidies to cover fuel and heating costs. Surely such measures merely served to increase citizens' dependency on the State welfare system? Given the cost of such subsidy programmes and the fact that to allocate funds to the programmes the State had cut salaries and pensions, might it not be preferable to dispense with such programmes and increase minimum wages and State pensions so that citizens could pay their fuel bills themselves?

29. In response to No. 32 on the list of issues, reference was made in the written replies to a draft State policy on alcohol and drugs. Perhaps it could be extended to cover smoking too? As a further measure to combat alcoholism and smoking, the Government might also consider the prohibition of media advertising for alcohol and tobacco. According to the information in the report there were now fewer youngsters in care. Was that because of a decrease in juvenile delinquency or a new policy?

30. He asked whether statistics existed on the numbers of houses built by private companies and individuals in rural and urban areas. He would also welcome information on the number of secondary residences, given the boom in the construction of holiday homes in other Eastern European countries and the difficulty the Government had in funding public housing. Also, was provision made for the demolition of private homes built without proper planning permission?

31. Ms. MARKINA (Ukraine) said that a national plan of action for human rights adopted in 1995 had provided the basis for Ukraine's ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights. A new plan of action had been under consideration since 2000 for which the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would provide financial assistance. It was hoped that work would get under way on the plan by the end of 2001 or early in 2002. The question of Ukraine's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant was currently being examined by the relevant Government departments.

32. Mr. YURPOLSKYI (Ukraine), responding to the many questions regarding the status of women, said that Ukraine was already implementing a national action plan for the advancement of women and greater gender equality. A presidential decree had been adopted on additional

measures to protect women and to strengthen relevant legislation with a view to Ukraine's accession to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. The Ukrainian Ministry of the Interior had also examined the Protocol against Trafficking in Persons with a view to amending national legislation. The new Ukrainian Criminal Code covered a wide range of offences against women: illegal abortion and forcing women to abort; infection with the HIV/AIDS virus, especially of medical staff; rape and forcing women into sexual relations; and trafficking in persons.

33. He confirmed that article 110 of the new Criminal Code made a person responsible for involving another in prostitution liable for prosecution. However, the former Criminal Code had also provided for criminal responsibility for such acts.

34. New draft legislation on domestic violence laid down the legal and organizational bases for the prevention and punishment of such violence, with due regard for the legitimate interests of different family members. It also provided for the monitoring of activities by official bodies responsible for investigating cases and assisting victims, and for the first time gave a legal definition of physical, sexual and psychological violence.

35. Work was also under way on draft legislation to ensure that social and economic policies took the needs of women into account, for instance in the labour market and access to health care. An effort was being made to improve the overall environment for Ukrainian citizens, with special emphasis on the family, and to promote greater awareness of the rights of women.

36. Alcoholism did not pose a major problem in the Ukraine; its citizens did not drink more than those of other countries. Homelessness, especially among young people, had been a serious problem some five years earlier as a direct consequence of the reform process. However, it was no longer a cause for concern.

37. The European Union had provided financial support for a major project to assist the Ukrainian authorities in combating the very complex and broad-ranging problem of trafficking in women. One of the key aspects of the project was to provide support to relevant government departments. An interdepartmental coordination committee had already been set up for that purpose.

38. He would provide figures on the number of women who were victims of international trafficking. A series of bilateral agreements, in particular, with Greece, Israel and the United Arab Emirates, had been drawn up to protect the women concerned. The Government of Ukraine was well aware of the problem of the trade in human beings and was making every effort to put a stop to it. Mr. Hunt had asked whether there were regional offices of the Ombudsman. In fact, regional offices not only existed but were particularly active. The chief Ombudsman had outlined their activities in her recent report, the Office of the Ombudsman, although a new institution, was functioning effectively.

39. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine), responding to questions on housing, said that in the past, 95 to 100 per cent of residential construction had been undertaken by the State. With changes in property laws and the right to ownership, that proportion had fallen substantially and

private sector involvement was increasing, particularly as a result of increased access to credit. For example, young couples could get loans to buy their own homes. The private sector was largely responsible for the repair and renovation of second homes in rural areas.

40. With regard to the impact of subsidies, the Government was not yet in a position to increase wages and pensions to levels that would obviate the need for widespread subsidies to assist the poorest segments of the population. Pensions currently represented a third of the last year of earned income. For the time being, therefore, subsidies would have to continue. Families comprising a single wage-earner with elderly dependants or children were particularly vulnerable. In future, an attempt would be made to take account of average income as a basis for granting subsidies. The informal sector was thriving, and many people who were officially unemployed - or even officially employed - worked in the informal sector, thereby evading tax. In determining subsidy levels the Government was therefore trying to take account of real income, including informal sector earnings.

41. The country faced great challenges. Some 17 million people still lived in inadequate housing, and many families - particularly families with a large number of children or single-parent families - suffered financial hardship. But recent policy changes had led to improvements.

42. The need for extra income was a factor explaining the numbers of Ukrainians working abroad. The Government was taking steps to protect those migrant workers, especially women. Bilateral agreements covering social welfare, standards of living and wage rates were being negotiated with Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. An agreement had already been concluded with the Czech Republic, host to a large number of Ukrainian citizens, and an agreement with Bulgaria was on the point of being concluded.

43. Mr. BOLIUBASH (Ukraine) said that the status of mothers and children was of particular concern. The impact of poverty was seen, not only in inadequate nutrition and deteriorating maternal and child health, but also in the very fabric of society. Illegal adoptions had made the headlines a few years ago. In order to prevent abuses, the Government was setting up programmes for young parents in the art of parenting. In the past, three or four generations had lived together in the same household, and traditional family values had been passed on from one generation to the next. Now, children did not live with their parents or grandparents. The State was trying to compensate for the lack of family values through education. A teacher training programme had been established to equip teachers with the social and psychological skills needed to support families. The views expressed by the Committee at the current meeting would give an impetus to such efforts.

44. Programmes had been established to control alcohol, tobacco and psychotropic drug use. Healthy living was taught in schools, and the syllabus included education in the dangers of alcohol, drugs and tobacco as part of a comprehensive effort to provide primary prevention. Smoking was prohibited in schools.

45. Regarding the role of religion, for many years Ukraine had been an atheist country, but the Church was once again beginning to assert its influence. The Pope had recently visited the country and held meetings with young people.

46. Despite family assistance, allowances for orphans and disabled children, and an increasing number of summer camps, there were serious problems among the young. Many young people took drugs and there was a high level of juvenile delinquency. Almost 8 per cent of all convictions were of juveniles. In order to contain that problem, efforts were being made to train specialized social workers. At present orphans lived and studied within the same institution. The new thinking was that there should be separate residential and educational establishments. In general, the welfare of young people was a matter of great concern.

47. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine), responding to questions raised by Mr. Pillay, said that the Government had made the alleviation of poverty a high priority. Efforts were being made to increase incomes, in particular by establishing a minimum wage and by protecting purchasing power through the indexing of incomes to take account of inflation. Another approach was to reduce unemployment and increase unemployment benefit. Within a year it was planned to raise unemployment benefit from one third to over half the minimum wage.

48. There were more than 4 million old-age pensioners in the Ukraine, representing around 290 pensioners per 1,000 members of the population. Unemployment benefits, family allowances and other social expenditure placed a heavy burden on wage earners. The social insurance system was being reformed, but it was difficult to make improvements in the short term. The intention was to extend coverage to such areas as occupational accidents and diseases, maternity leave and health insurance. In the past, social security had been entirely State run. Currently, social security was managed jointly by Government, employers and trade unions. Figures on social security coverage and AIDS and HIV testing would be provided in writing.

49. Mr. GRISSA asked for clarification of the parliamentary structure and, in particular, whether the Supreme Soviet still existed.

50. Mr. RATTRAY asked whether pensioners were better off under the current social security system than they had been under the previous regime.

51. Mr. YURPOLSKYI (Ukraine) said that the supreme legislative body was the Supreme Council, or Soviet. Although the Supreme Council was colloquially referred to as the parliament, it in fact had more extensive powers, as it combined legislative and executive power.

52. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine) said that quality of life included ethical as well as material aspects. Democracy had immense value. From a purely material standpoint, however, pensioners were worse off than under the previous regime, as pensions had not kept pace with increases in the cost of living. Nevertheless, reforms were under way, the pension fund was being put on a sound financial footing and debts were being paid off. Pensions would gradually rise and the standard of living of pensioners would improve.

Articles 13-15 of the Covenant

53. Mr. HUNT requested information on issue 39 regarding the right to education.

54. Mr. MARCHÁN ROMERO, referring to the intellectual property regime, under article 15 of the Covenant, noted that the State party intended to reform articles 136 and 137 of the Criminal Code, and asked what measures the authorities would take to ensure that the benefits of science and technology programmes were available to the general population.

55. Mr. GRISSA asked what the term "postgraduate" denoted in Ukraine, since the State party had claimed that there were 2.6 million postgraduates, three times as many as the number of undergraduates.

56. Mr. THAPALIA observed that the deterioration in educational standards had resulted in mounting illiteracy. What steps was the Government taking to improve a situation in which poor children frequently dropped out of school and teachers often went on strike? And what measures were in place to ensure that all refugee children had access to education?

57. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO asked what the State party was doing to encourage the cultural values of the country's various ethnic groups and preserve and disseminate their culture and language.

58. Mr. SADI asked why the quality of education had so greatly deteriorated under the new regime. Was the State party familiar with the Committee's General Comments Nos. 11 and 13 on the right to education? Would it consider applying them as the criteria for improving educational services? Could the delegation say whether the downward trend in science and technology education occasioned by the poor remuneration of scientific work and by the migration of scientists to other countries was being reversed?

59. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked, with reference to article 13, whether associations of national minorities could establish private primary and secondary schools, since religious organizations were not authorized to do so. Also, how did teachers' remuneration compare with that of other civil servants, such as police officers and judges. With reference to article 15, could books and newspapers be imported freely into Ukraine or were there certain criteria to be met?

60. Mr. BOLIUBASH (Ukraine), replying to Mr. Grissa's question concerning the large number of postgraduates, said that they included students following refresher courses, as well as those engaged in postgraduate work. Pre-school education was completely free and primary and secondary education was free and compulsory. Although vocational training and higher education were also free, entrance was based on competitive examinations, owing to the shortage of places. There had been a single education system in the pre-independence era. Subsequently, with the enactment of the Education Act, higher education had been overhauled, with new regimes of monitoring, licensing and accreditation of its institutions. In addition, with the division of secondary schools into gymnasia, lycées and the like, the more demanding criteria had resulted in a drain on teaching staff. From a sociological standpoint, while education might be poorer than it had been under the Soviet system, there had been a considerable improvement in the standards that had obtained during the transition period.

61. The Ukrainian higher education system was short of graduates in disciplines such as new information technologies, in which the country lagged behind. The reasons for the departure of

many Ukrainian scientists were economic, but the authorities were endeavouring to improve academics' remuneration and pensions, which had already been doubled in 2001, while teachers' salaries would rise by 15 per cent in September 2001. The migration of scientists could not really be described as a "brain drain" at the doctorate level, for instance, and interest in higher education had not declined.

62. Since independence, the Government had been doing its utmost to protect minority cultures and had preserved a number of cultural monuments. Private schools were recognized under Ukrainian legislation, and the number of private secondary and higher education institutions had more than doubled between 1999 and 2001. Religion and education were kept separate under the Education Act, although basic theology could be taught in Sunday schools.

63. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine) said the average monthly remuneration of teachers in June 2001 had been 256 hryvna (HRV) or US$ 50, higher than the average for some other professions, but lower than that for industry, which stood at HRV 414. State employees, including teachers, had availed themselves of the provisions of the new 1999 law governing industrial relations to go on strike, as a result of which there had been two recent increases in teachers' salaries.

64. Mr. BOLIUBASH (Ukraine) said his country had lost ground in the quality of education during the transition period, but was doing its best to raise the level. Negotiations were under way with the international community in an endeavour to bring legislation into line with European Standards; Ukraine had signed agreements with 55 countries. It had devised a national strategic plan for comprehensive reform, which would shortly be considered by a congress of Ukrainian teachers. The reform of secondary education, aimed at making it more pupil-centred, had begun in 2000, and even in rural areas the Government was introducing information technology in schools. While the situation was not yet fully satisfactory, considerable progress had been made.

65. Mr. ZUHRAVYI (Ukraine), replying to a question by Mr. Wimer Zambrano, said the authorities assigned high priority to multicultural and multi-ethnic life. National minorities were represented on interdepartmental and intergovernmental committees, which conferred with their counterparts in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. They were also involved in national decision-making concerning their cultural heritage. Despite the Government's scant success in securing funding for such activities, a special allocation was being made for national culture in the 2002 budget.

66. The country comprised 130 ethnic groups, which had lived together for centuries, and the Government's multicultural approach was a priority under State policy. It had created in the Office of the President an advisory committee on minorities in an effort to find acceptable solutions to the problems affecting them. Legislation and other regulations governing cultural freedom had been adopted, and ethnic minorities enjoyed the same rights to cultural life as other segments of the population.

67. There was an integrated set of measures for 2001 to promote cultural life by helping ethnic minorities organize cultural festivities and arrange meetings with people from their respective diasporas. The situation could not change overnight, but a new programme,

scheduled to be implemented until 2005, was being formulated to protect the cultural and linguistic traditions of minorities. Various associations within the secondary-school system helped to preserve minority languages, in which there were over 100 books and publications. Promotion of those languages was not a purely centralized matter, but included practical work in the regions. Over the previous two years various national minority organizations had held congresses and formulated recommendations, and had sent representatives to a recent conference in Yalta.

68. Mr. BOLIUBASH (Ukraine) said problems relating to intellectual property were being gradually resolved. A special department for intellectual property had been established in the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Institute of Computer Information Technology promoted access to information for all. Some 10 laws had been enacted and others amended.

69. Mr. PAVLISHIN (Ukraine) said his delegation would transmit in writing to the Committee the replies to any unanswered questions. He thanked the members for their condolences in connection with the recent coal-mining tragedy that had resulted in loss of life, and for their courteous dialogue with the delegation. He requested that the delegation's introductory statement, which had not been delivered in full because of time constraints, be taken into account in the formulation of the Committee' s concluding observations, which, he promised, would be given every consideration during the preparation of the fifth periodic report.

70. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the delegation for the goodwill it had displayed and for the openness of its discussion with the Committee.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.